

Q&A BOOK for Stateless Children

What is the nationality status of a child born to an unmarried woman who is a foreign national?

When the child was born, the parent(s) may not have submitted a report of birth to the embassy of her/his country.

The child might even
have a Residence Card
but still be

“STATELESS”!

We know the nationality of the mother, but we might not have proof of the child's nationality.

If you have questions like these, contact ISSJ for a free consultation and advice.

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What is "nationality"? Nationality means that a person is recognized and registered as a citizen of a specific country. Even if birth gives a child the nationality of his or her parents, if a birth notification is not reported and registered, the child will not be able to exercise the rights of a citizen of that country. For acquiring nationality in such case, cooperation is crucial among the child's guardians, child guidance centers, baby and children's homes, embassies and consular offices, and other organizations help the child through the process in accordance with the child's intention. It is also helpful to seek the advice of lawyers, specialized organizations or other experts knowledgeable about the process of acquiring nationality.

Q.1

How do I check if someone is “stateless”?

A

To confirm whether or not a person is stateless, check the following items.

Even if a country name is written on a Residence Card, it does not always mean that the card holder holds nationality of that country!

A person may not have nationality if none of the items below is checked!

Check!

Check!

☐

Does the child have a passport or other identification issued by the child's country of birth?

Check!

☐

Is the child's birth registered in the child's country of birth?

Check!

☐

Have you ever consulted with the embassy of the child's country of birth?

Check!

☐

Have you checked the laws in the birth country of the child's parent(s)?

(In some cases, a country will not grant nationality to a non-marital child)

If you are not sure about any of these items,
**please refer to the information
on the back page about a free consultation.**



Case studies

Case 1

Problem I cannot get a job because I am "stateless".

The person concerned Ms. A, who was raised at a children's home.

Person who made referral City Hall case worker

Support provided

Ms. A's parents are Thai. After her birth, her mother went missing and her father was deported. As a result, she was raised in a children's home. While in the home, no arrangements were made to acquire nationality status for her, which made it further difficult to get employment after leaving the children's home. An ISSJ social worker talked with her and helped her get the documents needed to register her birth at the Thai Embassy.

Case 2

Problem Statelessness (unregistered)

The person concerned Siblings staying in a children's home

Person who made referral Children's home staff member

Support provided

The siblings are the children of Filipino parents but were born in Japan. The father is currently serving a prison sentence, and the mother returned to the Philippines without reporting the children's birth to the Philippine Embassy and began living with a new partner. Then, ISSJ requested the Department of Social Welfare and Development in the Philippines to visit the mother and get her cooperation in arranging the required documents to register the births of her children. ISSJ also made request to the Philippine Embassy in Japan to meet the father in the prison to have him sign the children's report of birth forms and the affidavits of admission of paternity. Through these procedures, the children obtained nationality status.

Q.2

What are the risks of being “stateless”?

A

A "stateless" person is a person who is not recognized by any country as a citizen.

Being stateless imposes lifelong disadvantages.

In other words, a stateless person has no legal connection to any country. All children have the right from birth to have a name, and the right to acquire a nationality (*). But children without nationality and official identification lack protection of their fundamental human rights and are deprived valuable opportunities in the lifetime.

*Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 7 Section 1

A stateless child may face these disadvantages:

Restrictions
on
movement

Cannot obtain a passport

Cannot travel overseas

When
grown up

Hard to get employed

Cannot register a marriage

A stateless child also has these worries

I'm afraid that people around me will find out about my status.

I'm not confident in myself because I am stateless.



A personal story

A staff member at a children's home tells a story about obtaining nationality status for a child at the home!

A sudden call to tell that a child in our home lost his Japanese nationality. With the help of a lawyer, the child's nationality is restored after a 4 year and 10 month effort.

One day we received an unexpected call from a municipal office telling us that a child's Japanese status in our children's home had been removed from the family register and lost his Japanese nationality. The child had come to the children's home due to negligence of parental responsibility, and again they became the reason for the loss of his nationality. There was a lot of discussion among us about when and how to explain such difficult situation to the child, and by whom. There were three parties helping the child: a lawyer responsible for handling legal matters, the Child Guidance Center, which ensured that the child could continue living at the home despite his adverse circumstances, and children's home staff members, who prepared documents concerning the child's situation, listened to the child's questions and concerns, acted as a go-between between the child, the lawyer and Child Guidance Center, and sometimes explained the situation to the child on their behalf.

These three parties formed a team to help the child and to work on restoring his nationality status. During this process, we at the children's home were encouraged by the collaborations with the lawyer with whom we could consult about the situation and its prospects for success, and after a long four years and ten months we succeeded in giving the child the help he needed.



Q.3

Where can I go for advice?

A

You can contact **ISSJ**.

If you are concerned about a child's nationality, the first step is getting advice. Obtaining nationality can take several years. If you have questions or concerns, don't delay.

Contact for free consultation

Depending on your preferences and needs, we can help you acquire nationality status for a child with the support of a specialized lawyer

International
Social Service Japan

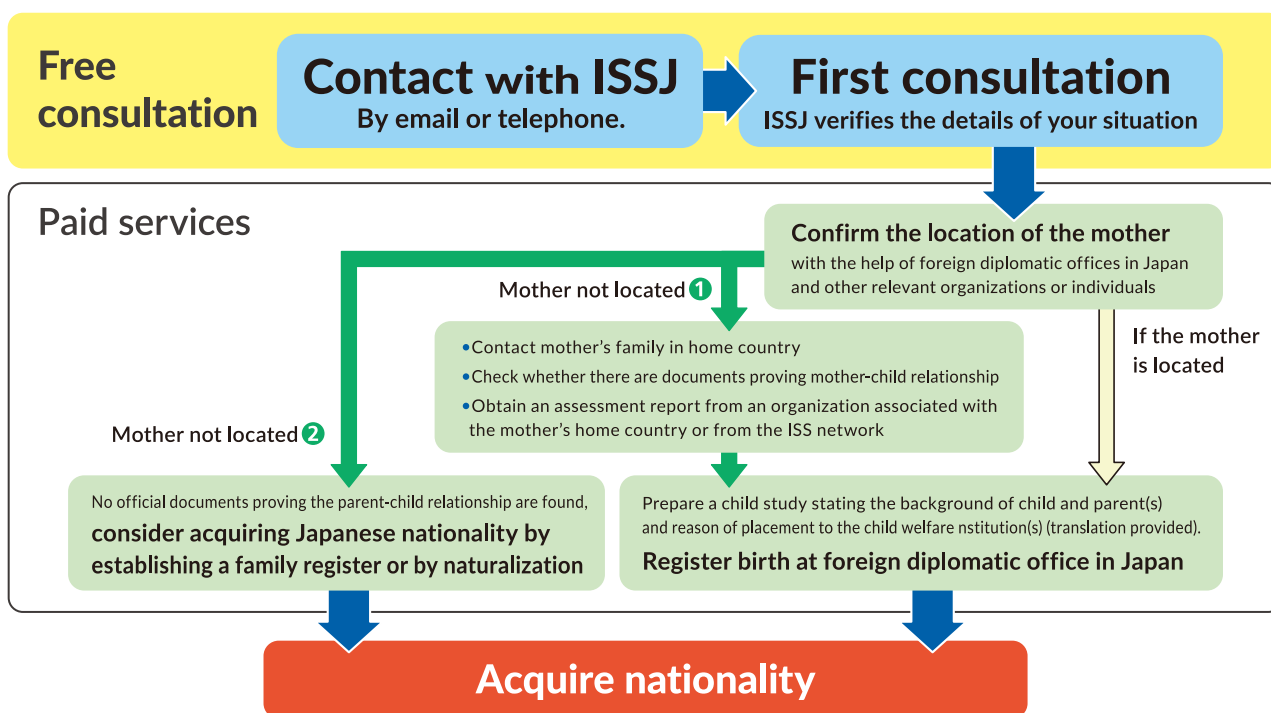
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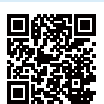
*There are then various expedients to move forward: for example, ISSJ will introduce you to a lawyer who takes responsibility for handling the process, or ISSJ and the lawyer will work together.

Example of the process of acquiring nationality



*The process may vary from this example depending on the case.

*For children with residency status, we recommend requesting disclosure of personal information to the Immigration Bureau and obtaining a certified true copy of birth report



For more information concerning statelessness, please visit our website.
<https://www.issj.org/en/statelessness>

